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INFO RHEHAAA/NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA IMMEDIATE
RUEHRG/AMCONSUL RECIFE 0049
RUEHRI/AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO
RUEHSO/AMCONSUL SAO PAULO

UNCLAS SAO PAULO 000704

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TAGS: [OPRC](#) [OIIP](#) [BR](#) [XM](#) [XR](#) [KMDR](#) [AF](#)
SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: OBAMA'S AFGHAN STRATEGY

"Obama's Afghan Target"

Editorial in center-right O Estado de S. Paulo (12-3) states:
"....It remains unclear, for example, whether the main target is to defeat the Taliban or to eradicate the cancer of Al Qaeda in the region....[The U.S. mission] is tied to a strategy that Obama, his generals and civilian advisors may draw, but whose control escapes from their hands. Because it depends on the Afghan government, army and security forces.....Obama's strategy to transfer responsibility to the local population is based on the strategy Bush used in Iraq in 2007, with reasonable success and called the 'surge'.....But none of these will be possible while Afghans remain convinced that the U.S. is there only to protect President Karzai."

"Obama imitates Bush"

Editorial in liberal Folha de S. Paulo (12-3) notes: "Different from the invasion of Iraq, the Afghan war cannot be questioned about its legitimacy. ...[Even though Obama] fears that people will make associations between his government's and George W. Bush's....., the decision to increase the military presence in Afghanistan was indeed very close to Bush's 'surge' strategy.....[Nevertheless] it is a fact that the differences between the two countries [Iraq and Afghanistan] cannot be neglected, and that a fragmented Afghanistan imposes greater difficulties. It would not be by [simply] watching the Taliban's advance that Obama would meet his target, in the near future, of withdrawing the majority of U.S. troops from that country."
White